

The bill also codifies requirements for additional transparency by mandating certain public reporting by the government, authorizing additional reporting by providers, and establishing a statutory mechanism for declassification and release of FISA Court opinions consistent with national security. It establishes a process for appointment of an amicus curiae to assist the FISA Court and FISA Court of Review in appropriate matters. It provides reforms to national security letters, requiring review of the need for their secrecy. The bill also closes potential gaps in collection authorities and increases the maximum criminal penalty for materially supporting a foreign terrorist organization.

Overall, the significant reforms contained in this legislation will provide the public greater confidence in how our intelligence activities are carried out and in the oversight of those activities, while ensuring vital national security authorities remain in place. You have our commitment that we will notify Congress if we find that provisions of this law significantly impair the Intelligence Community's ability to protect national security. We urge the Congress to pass this bill promptly.

Sincerely,

LORETTA E. LYNCH,
Attorney General.

JAMES R. CLAPPER,
Director of National Intelligence.

Mr. LEAHY. But even more importantly, last week the House of Representatives passed the USA FREEDOM Act of 2015 with an overwhelming vote of 338 to 88. At a time when the public says Congress is locked in partisan gridlock, look at this overwhelming vote of Republicans and Democrats for the USA FREEDOM Act. Well, the Senate ought to do the same thing the House did.

We can keep our country safe without a government database of billions of Americans' phone records. I think about Richard Clarke, who is a former counterterrorism official. He spent six months examining this program as a member of the President's Review Group. He concluded the program has "no benefit." We do not need it, and, more importantly, Americans do not want it.

I fear that if Congress does not end this bulk collection program, it will only open the door to the next dragnet surveillance program. Next time it will not just be phone records. It might be location information or medical records or credit card records. That is why it is so important to stop it now.

Some will say Congress doesn't need to act because the Second Circuit has already ruled that this program is illegal. I have read the court's decision, I agree with it, and I hope this panel decision will ultimately be upheld by the Supreme Court. But there are other pending lawsuits and it could be months or even years before we know how the courts will ultimately rule on this issue.

In addition, the USA FREEDOM Act doesn't just end bulk collection under section 215 and the other national security authorities; it also contains other important reforms that cannot be won through legal challenges, such as new transparency measures and a panel of

experts from which the FISA Court can draw on for amicus support. So the courts made it very clear Congress has to act.

Congress has spent years working on these issues, with numerous hearings. The Senate last year came up with basically the same bill the House has just overwhelmingly passed. We shouldn't be staying around here talking about whether we are going to go over the brink. We are going to put our intelligence community under pressure.

The USA FREEDOM Act is a responsible solution that can pass both Chambers today, including with a majority vote for it in this body today. Its enactment will ensure that these expiring provisions do not sunset. I urge Senators to support it.

Let us not play politics with the security of this country. Let us talk about what really can be done, what has been done in a responsible, bipartisan way in the other body, and let us step up and do the same in the Senate. That is what I would urge, not this brinkmanship which will actually bring about the end of all of these provisions. Maybe some would like that. I think we have a better balance here with the USA FREEDOM Act.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum, and ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between the two parties.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO SONNY DIXON

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, it is not often that anyone comes to the floor of the Senate to praise a journalist one way or another; but in Georgia, on the 31st of May of this year, Sonny Dixon of Savannah, GA, will retire after 18 years of being the anchor at WTOG in Savannah, GA.

Sonny Dixon is a rare breed indeed in terms of political reporters because he has actually been in elected office, serving for years in the Georgia Legislature, some of those years with me. I know him as a friend, I know him as a professional, and I know him as coastal Georgia's best anchorman, period.

He was awarded the Edward R. Murrow Award and the Associated Press award for best anchor in Georgia. He has been recognized by everyone who can do so for his professionalism, his knowledge, his skill, and his talent.

It is a privilege for me to acknowledge today on the floor of the Senate his 18 years of service as an anchor, his 10 years of service in the Georgia Legislature, and his lifetime of commitment to the greatest State of all, the

State of Georgia, to the betterment of his community, to the betterment of Savannah, the first capital of the State.

So as we take this moment in time to pause, I want to congratulate Sonny Dixon on a great career and a great recognition that is well earned.

TRIBUTE TO ROY ROBERTS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I would like to talk about Roy Roberts from Walton County, GA. It is not often that a Senator from Georgia rises to pay tribute to a Kentucky basketball player, but Roy Roberts played for the famous Adolf Rupp in the 1960s and was an All-SEC basketball player for the University of Kentucky. He was a great player and made many all-star teams and received many awards, but he came back to Georgia to ranch and farm 1,000 acres, raise Hereford cows, and, with his two brothers, make Walton County, GA, the centerpiece of our State.

He has annually participated in many things that involve politics and public involvement in Walton County and has helped to lead Walton County to be one of the leading Republican counties in the State of Georgia.

Most notable is the Roy Roberts annual barbecue, which takes place next Tuesday in Walton County, GA, where over 1,000 Georgians and Presidential candidates from all over the country will come to meet at Roy Roberts' farm, enjoy a little barbecue, and enjoy the best of grassroots politics.

Were it not for people like Roy Roberts, we wouldn't have the body politic we have, we wouldn't have the democracy we have, and Georgia would not be the great State it is.

I am pleased to rise today and commend to everyone the work of citizen Roy Roberts, a great American, a great Georgian, and a pretty doggone good basketball player for the University of Kentucky.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it was just a few weeks ago that the Senate took up and passed S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. This bill took us a while to get through but ultimately garnered unanimous support from this Chamber with a vote of 99 to 0. I am happy to report that the House of Representatives will take up and pass this bill later on today, and this vital legislation will then head to the President for his signature.